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THE MEDIAEVAL MIMUS

PART II

I certainly did not suspect, when in an earlier part of this essay I promised to examine the literary records of the Dark Ages for traces of the mimi, that anyone would question the reasonableness of my search. But quite recently Edmund Faral has asserted that hunting in these records for Latin mimi is love's labor lost. He says

Périssable comme la joie des banquets et des fêtes qu'ils égayaient, l'œuvre des mimes s'est perdue. Du chant des poètes il n'est rien resté de plus que de l'adresse éphémère des saltimbanques. . . . En fin de compte, il y a deux choses que, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, il faut renoncer à savoir: c'est s'il y a une relation entre les poèmes latins que nous avons conservés et les œuvres des mimes; c'est ensuite, si cette relation existe, quelle elle est. On ne peut élever ici que de frêles conjectures. Si les mimes ont chanté, leurs chants ont été enfermés avec eux dans le tombeau, et ce qu'il en est resté dans la mémoire de leurs contemporains s'est éparpillé, déformé et perdu.¹

I admit being frankly bored by *obiter dicta* such as these of Faral's. Neither he nor anyone else knows what a careful search will bring about until the material has been personally examined. I am as impatient as Faral, or any other student, of that unfortunate tendency in modern investigation: viz., to examine with brave display of erudition every stray bit of philological evidence that exists regarding the mimus, and then to jump to any conclusion which suits the irresponsible whim of the historian. For this evident

¹ Cf. *Les jongleurs en France au moyen-âge* (1910), 14, 16.

fault Faral rightly censures Paul von Winterfeld, and I agree with him. But not to examine whatever evidence we possess as to the existence of Latin mimi during the Dark Ages, and then to denominate them straight out the fathers of the mediaeval jongleurs (and Faral does this) is a highhanded proceeding.

How can Faral be so sure that the work of the mimi was as perishable as the gaiety of the banquets which they enlivened, unless he look about him to make sure? There is *a priori* no more reason why an eighth- or ninth-century chronicle should not catalogue the repertory of the mimus, than why a thirteenth-century Provençal novel should tell us so much about the activity of the jongleurs. If, that is, the mimi did sing the popular songs and tell the popular stories of their day, as the later jongleurs did, why then it seems to me almost imperative that we search the literary records of that day, almost sure that we shall come across their traces in these records.

To discover what the jongleur was doing in the Middle Ages, one has but to turn to *Flamenca*¹ and learn how he played on every conceivable musical instrument and had at his tongue's tip every popular song and story in Europe; but we can only theorize about what the mimus was doing in the Dark Ages in the way of song and story. Faral asserts that during the Dark Ages the mimus was doing what the jongleur did later, only that the former's repertoire was much smaller. And I say that Faral has no right to an opinion in the matter, because he confessedly places no reliance upon the literary records in his search for mimus, because he trusts implicitly in the historical records of the Dark Ages.

Now these historical records are unfortunately not only mute as to what songs and stories the Latin mimi brought into Europe, but they are untrustworthy sources as well for any specific knowledge regarding their exact activity. We have seen above and we shall see again below how little value can be accorded the indiscriminate lists of various classes of popular entertainers contained in the historical records Faral prizes so highly. The reasons for this untrustworthiness and the bibliography of the records themselves I have already sufficiently treated.² Let us, however, turn for a moment

¹ Ed. Paul Meyer (1865), vss. 584 ff.

² *Modern Philology*, V, 436 ff., VII, 337 ff.; cf. also the excursus at the end of this study.

to the excellent list of old German glosses for "poet, singer, entertainer" made ten years ago by Schönbach,¹ as the most graphic way in which we can here illustrate the confusion which confronts that historian who, like Faral, would determine just what any one word such as scop or mimus meant at the first dawn of the Middle Ages.

We discover that Zimmer was doubtless right in his suggestion that scop meant not alone the dignified epic singer of antiquity but one who entertained his audience with quip and joke,² we find that mimus meant not alone the Roman vaudeville artist but minstrel in the widest sense of the word.³ How, when such is the state of the case, can Faral depose that descendants of the Latin vaudeville-performers were the ancestors of the jongleurs? It is true that we *do* know more or less about the monkey-tricks of early mimi, as we do about those of the later jongleurs. And in a certain way we can trace the tricks of the one back to those of the other,⁴ for in *Flamenca* we find our old favorite turns of Empire days still in vogue:

603 L'us fai lo juec dels banastelz
 L'autre jugava de coutelz;
 L'us vai per sol e l'autre tomba,
 L'autre balet ab sa retomba;
 L'us passet sercle, l'autre sail;
 Neguns a son mestier non fail.

But it is not of the circus-performer or of the variety-actor that we are thinking when we speak of jongleur as the child of mimus; it is of the creative artist, the poet, the fashioner and preserver of literary themes and types. Faral seems to forget this salient fact, or he would wilfully blind our eyes to it, for he does nothing toward narrowing and limiting his definition either of mimus or jongleur. On the contrary he deliberately enlarges it.

I object strenuously to this enlargement of the definition of jongleurs to mean "tous ceux qui faisaient profession de divertir les hommes,"⁵

¹ *Wiener Sitzungsberichte*, CXLII, Part VII, 61 ff. I should have forgotten this reference had Mr. G. L. Hamilton not recalled it to me.

² Zimmer, *Quellen und Forschungen*, XIII (1876), 287 f.; Schönbach, *op. cit.*, 64.

³ Schönbach, *op. cit.*, 67.

⁴ Although it is often by no means necessary to do so. In their continual search for concrete sources, students are prone to forget what Crusius calls the homely Aristotelian truth, that the impulse to play and to imitate is among the most elemental stirrings of the human soul, and that this common impulse sometimes quite innocently creates similar types of vaudeville among peoples which have never come into close contact.

⁵ Faral, *op. cit.*, 2.

if it is to be at once used to prove that mediaeval spielmann and jongleur derive straight from Latin mimus. Such enlargement simply clouds the issue. Remember, if you please, that when Faral says "les jongleurs étaient bel et bien des mimes" his readers at once and naturally imagine that Faral is claiming for the best of mediaeval art, for music, song, and story, a Latin origin. For these readers are thinking of jongleurs as did Diez:¹ "tous ceux qui faisaient de la poésie ou de la musique un métier." They are not thinking, nor do they care to think, of the jongleurs as including "la nombreuse catégorie des saltimbanques, des acrobates et des faiseurs de tours."²

I am not seeking the origin of the skill which permitted mediaeval trapeze-performers to swing by their toes or by their teeth, which taught balance on the slack-wire, which sent swords and stones and fire down the living throat, which distorted the human frame into strange shapes, which with a touch of the hand kept a circle of ten gilt balls in the air without one falling to the ground. Neither I, nor any other reader of Faral, cares tuppence at the present juncture whether all the monkey-tricks and the circus-art of the Middle Ages came straight from imperial Rome, or from Sparta, or from Thebes. What we do care for at this moment is to tear the veil from the apparent mystery which enshrouds the birth in early mediaeval Europe of the vernacular and realistic art of that jongleur who sang songs and told stories well worth listening to. Now if we confuse *this* sort of artist with every contemporary parasite and clown, or if we believe *this* artist got all his great and living art from earlier generations of professional jesters and fools who "avaient infiniment élargi le répertoire de leurs exercices primitifs, qu'ils l'avaient varié et compliqué,"³ then let us say simply that figs grow from thistles and that bricks are made from straw. It is an old artifice of the schools, this one of which we find Faral guilty: he enlarges his definition of jongleur, as do Reich and Winterfeld theirs of mimus, until it includes everything they wish it to. They then gravely derive from their swollen concepts whatever they wish and with a wave of the hand strut from the stage leaving behind them a puzzled

¹ *Die Poesie der Troubadours*, 31.

² Faral, 2, n. 1; cf. also his recent book *Mimes français du xiii^e siècle* (1910).

³ Faral, 12.

audience. French has a word for such artifice which other languages than English have copied: *legerdemain*.

We have seen that *mimus* is used by critics of the literature of the Dark Ages to mean: (1) Dramatic Performance; (2) Vaudeville; (3) Actor or Entertainer.¹

What then does Reich mean when he says that "everything dramatic in the world's literature that is not classic or imitated from classic models is *mimus*"?² What does Winterfeld mean when he asserts that "only through the continued existence of the *mimus* can we understand the development of the centuries"?³

In such statements they do not restrict the term "*mimus*"—and it is very important to realize this—to any one type of performance (such as drama, recited poem, or song), nor yet to any one type of performer. They make *mimus* betoken a certain literary attitude, they make it synonymous with *realism*. Reich calls almost "everything dramatic" *mimus*; Winterfeld says that the art of profane narration (*weltliche fabulierkunst*) and real life itself (*das lebendige leben*) are *mimus*. The latter would have us call *mimus* every realistic and living portrayal in prose and poetry during the Dark Ages. I protest.

It is not common-sense to make *mimus* in any age connote *biologia*. It is wrong to surrender bodily all the creative realistic literature of the Dark Ages to the commonplace crowd of second-rate vaudeville artists who may have swept northward from Italy during the migration period.⁴ It is absurd to trace the life-giving roots of this creative literature to the purely conventional art of these people.

For vaudeville art is conventional. In the more than two thousand years that we have known of it, the canons of this art have

¹ Cf. *Modern Philology*, VII, 329-32.

² Cf. *Der Mimus*, I (1903).

³ References to Winterfeld in the pages which follow are to his essay "*Der Mimus im Mittelalter*," *Herrig's Archiv*, CXIV, 48-75, 293-324, unless another title is cited.

⁴ Crusius remarks with much good sense: "I fancy that the authors and reciters of mimes during the empire did not claim to create works of any artistic far less of any literary merit. They furnished, as do our manufacturers of farces, salable stuff for a Roman season." Their audience was "the nobles who shouted themselves hoarse over the bear-mimes and the dog-shows, over the meaningless and sterile clatter of the circus and the vaudeville; the crowd of philistines, shopkeepers, and barbarians who seized the reins of government." Cf. Crusius, "Ueber das Phantastische im *Mimus*," *Ilberg's Neue Jahrbücher* (1910), 101.

been but seldom violated, few if any great creations have sprung from it. During all the centuries of which we have record, the mimi have been doing much the same thing in the same way. Their jokes bloom perennial, the business of the old mimi may be seen today on the stage of any variety-theater or in the circus-ring. It is nothing short of wonderful, how little their repertory and tricks have changed from the earliest known times when topical song, suggestive dance, portrayal of types of low life, dialect-recital, boasting, repartee, juggling, sleight of hand, buffoonery, and slap-stick were the vogue.

But if it is wrong to surrender creative realistic literature to the mimi, it is no better, I believe, to accord it bag and baggage to the scop. Kögel, for example, says that with the rise of the Frankish empire and the consequent downfall of the smaller courts the honorable state of the ancient poets had come into disrepute. He says that the impoverished descendants of the old *scoffa* now led a vagrant existence in German territory, had to reckon with the tastes of their new audience, the commoner herd, and were thus compelled to include farcical elements in their repertory. Thus, he explains, the poet became often a merry-andrew (*joculator, scurra*); thus it was that more vulgar narrative was fostered, that a great mass of fableaux and short stories suddenly appears in the second half of the ninth century.¹

I am thankful for Kögel's word "suddenly." For, if the creative realistic writing of the late ninth and early tenth centuries had not appeared "suddenly"; if it had come into being fearfully, painfully, step by step—then I should be almost persuaded that it was due to the gradual elevation of the repertory of the mimus, or the gradual degeneration of the scop, or the gradual awakening from a long sleep on the part of the monk. But there is nothing gradual about it—this mediaeval renaissance.² The most superficial examination of earlier records suffices to teach us that in the ninth century

¹ Cf. *Pauls Grundriss*², II, 62, 129.

² In this term I do not of course include, as does Scherer, that earlier and abortive "renaissance" which Charles the Great inaugurated, when on his return from the Italian campaigns he tried to gather at his court the best of the Latin culture of the world. For a profane literature divorced from theology did not at that time exist to any degree that made itself a factor in future German writing. Cf. Hauréau, *Charlemagne et sa cour* (1854), Mullinger, *The Schools of Charles the Great* (1877), Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Mediaeval Thought* (1884), Roger, *L'enseignement des lettres classiques* (1905).

realistic narrative literature came into existence at a single bound, just as at a later period the drama did. For this phenomenon nothing that we know of the opportunity confronting either mimus or scop, nothing we know about their ability to answer to a new opportunity in the ninth century, offers a sufficient explanation. If the impulse to new types of realistic narrative is to come, it presumably must come from without.¹ The mode or manner of this new variation in literature we know; but what is the cause of it?

To photograph life in art requires genius; it requires the immediate personal vision. One more thing is necessary before a realistic scene can take lasting form in a conscious literary product: viz., a diction suited to the purpose of the author. Of these two requisites for a living art, genius is of course the greater and the rarer. Shall we deny this visualizing power in the Dark Ages to the monk and the nun, as critics do, and accord it to the mimus or the scop? Shall we believe the vaudeville-artist could lay aside his slap-stick and write the tales of the monk of St. Gall² or tell Roswitha's legend of the founding of Gandersheim?³ Not I.

¹ It means little to me when Hertz in his *Spielmannsbuch* (2 f.) derives the older German minstrels from three groups: scopas, mimi, and vagrant clerks; it means little that Schönbach (*op. cit.*, 62) agrees with him in the main. For neither of these scholars makes clear the time, the reason, or the occasion of such a merging, except to posit it as possible. In other words they dodge, wittingly or not, the main issue. For if three differing art-forms were ever united into a new art-form, then we may be sure some specific impulse was necessary to bring about so desirable a result. To call attention to the opportunity of such a mingling of varied elements, without assigning a definite and valid reason therefor, accomplishes nothing. In every age of which we have record there has been constant opportunity to marry divergent forms of artistic expression and as the legitimate child of such wedlock secure a new literary type. But only rarely, apparently, has this happened, because the proper occasion was lacking.

² Doubtless Notker Balbulus; see Zeumer, *Historische Aufsätze dem Andenken an Georg Waitz gewidmet* (1886), 97 f.; Zeppelin, *Wer ist der monachus sangallensis?* (1890).

³ As the story is known to few if any of my readers, I give it here in a translation which leans heavily upon the German rendition of Winterfeld:

Old people tell the story, they who know the truth,
 How once long years ago by the cloister a forest stood
 Buried in mountain-shadows just as we are today.
 Deep in the midst of the woods there lay a farm
 Where Lord Ludolf's herdsmen were wont to search for pasture;
 In the hut of the tenant-farmer they found a night of rest
 As they stretched the wearied body on a lowly cot,
 When the time it was for guarding their master's herds of swine.
 Now here it came to pass that on two separate days
 Before the Feast of All Saints—the hour of night was late—
 The swains saw many a light flash in the forest dark.
 And as they looked at the vision at its meaning they marveled long,
 For they beheld the luster all of a glory strange

But it should never be forgotten that prior to the tenth century at least cultured German poets felt themselves impelled to express most of their thoughts in a foreign medium, Latin—a medium which no one of them commanded freely, and for two reasons. First, before a wider dissemination of education than then existed there would be none who could attain the stylistic ease which characterized the writings of twelfth-century men of letters; second, in the ninth and tenth centuries simplicity and correctness were rarely striven for, bombast and a rhetoric of word-inflation were the goal.¹

Now, I find no surer indication that it is not *mimus* or *scop* but monk to whom we owe the re-creation of realistic art in the ninth and tenth centuries than that it is just the monks and their

That shone so bright and steady through the grayness of the night.
 Slow and a-tremble they told it to the tenant of the fee,
 Him they pointed the spot which but now the light had illumined;
 And the wish was in his heart to see if the story were true,
 So he joined himself to their group out under the open sky
 And together they set the watch through all the following night.
 No slumber lent its weight to their unwavering eyelids
 Till they had seen again the lights which glistened there
 On the self-same spot, brighter than time before,
 At the very hour which the former night had known.
 In the morning when the sun rose its first beams
 Saw spread abroad the quickening words of rumor,
 Tidings glad of the omen and of its fortunate sign.
 Nor was the matter one to keep from Ludolf the duke,
 Without delay the tale entered his listening ears.
 And he made bold himself to see on the night of the feast
 If to his anxious waiting there might not return again
 The hoped-for symbol shown in the sky above;
 And under the forest-roof with many he stayed and watched.
 But now when night had veiled the lands in her gray mist,
 All round about in a circle there shone in the valley-glen,
 Where one time the cloister should uprear its proud mass,
 Full many a clear light twinkling in every place,
 Which in the radiant glory of its bright beams
 Broke through the shade of the woods, through the gloom of the night.
 At this from a single throat they sang the praise of the Lord,
 Said with one accord here was the sacred place
 To serve and honor Him who had filled it with His glory.
 And thus with grateful heart for all the mercy of God
 At the will of Ode his wife Duke Ludolf halted not
 From that time forth to fell the forest-trees,
 Uproot the thorns, and clear the valley's dells.
 He changed the wilderness where gnome and goblin dwelled
 To be a place of purity where God's praise loudly echoed.
 Whatever things were needful he gathered on the spot
 And laid the broad foundation of the cloister in that place
 Which the sign had shown him with its radiance clear.

¹ Cf. *Modern Philology*, VI, 10 f.

work which furnished all the bases of the mediaeval renaissance. Notker, Froumund, Ekkehard, the author of *Ruodlieb* and of the *Ecbasis*, Roswitha—it is such spirits, struggling with an inept Latin, who gave direction to the glories of a later and vernacular literature; they were the torchbearers. Popular proverbs and tales, the *volkslieder* sung on the streets, the saws of the humblest minstrel, fables learned in distant lands—it was not the patter of Italian vaudeville-artists which brought them into literature and held them there forever; it was the toilsome, if loving, labor of these same monks.¹

It was a great thing that these ecclesiastics did, uniting diverse elements that had hitherto been separate: finding expression for the humbler and more real elements of vernacular tradition in a Latin diction learned from long occupation with biblical-classical models. For this combination made in the monasteries during the ninth and tenth centuries established a new variation in literary forms which gave life and meaning to European literature.

Till that time there were at least three distinct streams of self-conscious and conventional art which ran parallel one to the other but which, so far as we know, never merged their identities:

1. *Alliterative mytho-epic ballads*, changing little through the centuries except as the people's belief in, and remembrance of, the older myths paled, and as new heroes came to replace the older ones. This type of "popular poetry" it is often believed was, if not created by, quite surely carried on and shaped by Germanic *scopas*.

2. *Vaudeville*: the lighter entertainment of every sort from mere juggling to farce which passed from age to age unscotched and it is often believed was brought into Europe by Roman *mimi*, and long continued there.

3. *Monastic copying of biblical and classical tradition*, which leaned entirely on the materials, emotions, and forms of the past and mani-

¹ At this point it may be objected by my reader that I do not take sufficiently into account the poetic coherence and the artistic beauty of the humble models which these monks occasionally incorporated into work of their own. In answer let me say that I believe any effectiveness which popular German art of the Dark Ages had was not due to the spasmodic effort of unlettered, unalert, and unimaginative men dwelling in some isolated community. No, it was in a crowded center of culture, where stirred throngs gathered, that the throes of composition brought forth an enduring and popular art of profane narration. And for the time we are considering, such centers were presumably found only in the monasteries. Cf. *Modern Philology*, VI, 101 f.

fested practically no power of either observation or invention. This was the work of *monks*. It was at heart not Germanic or Roman; it was curiously unracial.

Now from the work of such monks as these no future can reasonably be expected. First as last such work will consist of the dull multiplication of known facts. So the critic has felt himself justified in dismissing all monks from his study of the living sources of mediaeval literature. The critic then turns to the scopas and the mimi: the former, he knows, continued a dignified line of literature marked by lofty epic idealism;¹ the latter, he knows, maintained an undignified line of expression marked by a vulgar but contagious realism. The critic but adds the two together and gains as his total the repertory and art of European mediaeval minstrelsy. Why not? In the left hand I have one apple, in the right hand one apple; I place the apples together; now how many apples have I?

It is as easy as that. That is in a sense just the truth. There were two things separate, the two things united; *but who united them?* Who was it that took the stereotyped facts and figures of Germanic poetry, the stereotyped themes and tricks of lighter entertainment, and for the first known time in European history combined the two in a way that achieved variations of permanent influence? To this question there can be but one answer; the answer is written large and clear in a hundred records. It was the monks.

Variations of permanent influence in literature can be achieved only by writers with exceptional opportunities. Such opportunities in the ninth and tenth centuries lay in monastic culture and environment; they did not lie—in the nature of things they could not lie at that time—outside them. The moment these monks brought their inventive power, their significant ideas to bear upon their writings in such a way as to adjust them to the demands of contemporary thought and feeling, that moment we have no longer *monastic copying of biblical and classical tradition*, we have permanent mutations in literary expression² which yield:

¹ Although we should by no means believe this the only sort of literature cultivated by the scop; cf. *supra* p. 19.

² Cf. Hoskins, "Biological Analogy in Literary Criticism," *Modern Philology*, VI, 420; Manly, "Literary Forms and the New Theory of the Origin of Species," *Modern Philology*, April, 1907. I believe the main results of these two investigations stand firm despite Logeman's irony; cf. his "Biologie en de Studie van Taal en Letteren" (reprint from *Groot-Nederland*, March, 1910), 27 ff.

1. The novel—*Ruodlieb*.
2. The art-epic—*Waltharius*.
3. Legend quick with dialogue—Roswitha.
4. The short story—*Gesta Karoli* of Notker.
5. The beast-epic—*Ecbasis Captivi*.
6. Fableau and lyric—Cambridge MS.
7. Historical poems—*Ludwigslied*,

and a swelling list of satires and parodies, of hymns and sacred ballads even, which have laid aside their traditional adherence to an older art and breathe the life of their day.¹

Let us consider, by way of illustration, what the sequence and the church hymn did for profane poetry:

Occasionally, even in Carolingian poetry, we are surprised by a minstrel's quip (Uodalricus), by a vernacular debate-poem showing through learned Latin guise (the conflictus sometimes ascribed to Alcuin), by cloistral adaptation of jesting tale and fable,² or best of all by some drinking-round like that of the Abbot of Angers. But it is safe enough to say that no matter how witty the treatment of the theme is in such cases, the poems themselves have practically

¹ It is little edifying to note how Kögel unconsciously agrees with Winterfeld in ascribing to the wandering minstrels (*die Fahrenden*) whatever note of simplicity or realism he discovers in tenth-century poetry. The poet of *Christ and the Samaritan Woman* (Müllenhoff-Scherer, *Denkmäler*, No. x) "knows how to relate his theme simply and graphically . . . and shows contact with the minstrels"; the author of *De Heinricho* (*Denkmäler*, No. xviii) "is a cleric; but he has learned from the art of the minstrels and knows how to express himself concisely"; likewise did the poet of *Kleriker und Nonne*, Kögel thinks, have his theme from a minstrel. This is the old stupid formula: dull, verbose, incoherent=monk; witty, simple, graphic=minstrel. Will someone please tell me why?

This formula has been proven wrong a great many times, never perhaps more strikingly than in the case of *Waltharius*, which I feel has been definitely shown to be, not a Latin rewriting of alliterative heroic songs, but the artistic and largely original work of a monk, Ekkehard I [composed ca. 930], whose source was a mere tale; cf. Wilhelm Meyer, "Der Dichter des *Waltharius*," *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, XLIII, 113 ff; Strecker, "Probleme in der *Waltharius-Forschung*," *Ibergs Neue Jahrbücher* (1899), 573 ff., 629 ff. The most recent attempt to revive Jacob Grimm's "Visigothic epic of Walter of Spain" is ingenious but unconvincing; cf. Menéndez Pidal, *L'épopée castillane trad. de Mérimée* (1910), 18 ff.

² Ker's statement is succinct (*Dark Ages*, 199): "No literary work in the Dark Ages can be compared for the extent and far-reaching results of its influence with the development of popular Latin verse. The hymns went farther and affected a larger number of people's minds than anything else in literature. They gave the impulse to fresh experiment which was so much needed by scholarly persons; provided new rules and a new ideal of expression for the unscholarly. Those who had no mind to sit down and compose an epithalamium in hexameters or a birthday epistle in elegiacs might still write poetry in Latin—unclassical Latin, indeed, but not dull, not ungentle—a language capable of melody in verse and impressiveness in diction."

none of the lightness, grace, skill in versification, and suggestiveness which modern art demands and attains. We are almost sure to find Carolingian poetry far distant from modern ideas, close on the one hand to classical tradition, on the other to the Bible. Theodulf, poet-laureate to the Palace, sums up the matter neatly when he sings

Te modo Virgilium, te modo Naso loquax:
In quorum dictis quanquam sint frivola multa,
Plurima sub falso tegmine vera latent,

except that to Vergil and Ovid other classical models should be added, and the Bible as trusted source of all poetizing needed no comment by Theodulf.

Nor, apparently, was the matter much improved in the poems of tenth-century authors who neglected the opportunity furnished them by the sequence and the hymn. For such songs as the *O admirabile Veneris idolum*, the *Jam dulcis amica venito*, the *alba*, and the *Ode to a Nightingale* lack each one that modern breath which is soon to move in poetry. The first two are lyrical survivals of the past and—effective as they are—no nearer the present manner than the *Vigils of Venus*; the last two are as unbending and stiff as early ecclesiasticism itself. But the Cambridge MS alone is sufficient evidence of the fact that, because of the framework given profane poets by the sequence and the hymn, because of the application of a new Latin to humble vernacular narratives of various kinds, by the end of the tenth century the history of modern poetry is begun. For this MS contains at least one beautiful lyric, the *Levis exsurgit zephyrus*, which is as “unmediaeval” as any modern poem; several extremely clever fableaux, two of them gaining inimitable parody from their employment of the sequence-form,¹ others using the broad effectiveness of a five-syllabled popular line; and one or more songs which are as if made for tavern-entertainment, like the *Johannes abba parvulus*. Other evidences such as the ballad of the wicked dancers of Kölbigk, the love-message in *Ruodlieb*, and songs and hints of songs I have here no space to mention²—these things inform

¹ The leich is a direct descendant of the sequence, dactyls and all, but with rhyme added; cf. Lachmann, *Kleinere Schriften*, I, 334.

² For further study of the material here spoken of, see *Modern Philology*, V, 423 ff.; VI, 3 ff., 137 ff., 340 ff.

us clearly that the monks and the monastic schools had given Europe the four prerequisites for a body of splendid "modern" poetry:

1. The artist with imagination and training.
2. The desire to portray real life in art.
3. Models which the unscholarly could amplify.
4. An audience eager for the author's work.

And yet—and yet Winterfeld contends that only through the continued existence of the mimus may we understand the development of the centuries. Why, where is now his mimus vanished? Surely, if, when the culture of the ninth century cherished in the monastic schools was lighting the way to the modern art of profane narration, there existed a solitary descendant of the old Italian vaudeville-performer in Germany; then just so surely do we know what this mimus was doing. He was mouthing, dancing, squawking, playing on some strange instrument, eating fire, swallowing a sword, engaging in lascivious pantomime with an unclothed mima, juggling with gilt balls, playing the stupid, bragging absurdly, taking off his audience, pounding somebody's head with a make-believe club, balancing a table on his chin, or doing some other thing equally as delightful, some thing for which we moderns seem much in his debt—witness our joy in present-day circuses and "continuous performances." But I feel quite sure this mimus of the Dark Ages was sublimely unconscious he would ever be called upon to father the mediaeval jongleur and spielmann.

Nor can we avoid the issue by believing the minstrel of the ninth century to be not the old Italian vaudeville-performer, but a metamorphosis of him. At times I suspect Wilhelm Scherer. When he says that "*der spielmann ist eine metamorphose des römischen mimus*"¹ I want to know when the change took place, why it took place, who established it, how it happened, what was the result. And of this Scherer says not one word.²

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung im xi. und xii. Jahrhundert*, 11; *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*¹⁰, 60.

² I am reminded by Scherer's oracular phrase of a classroom dialogue overheard by me some years ago:

Professor: The German empire is a schoolmaster's dream.

Student: But I thought it the creation of Bismarck.

Professor: Bismarck was a schoolmaster.

Now I had thought that Roman mimus was Roman mimus, and am no less surprised to discover him "metamorphosed" by a wave of the hand into German spielmann than was another poor student to discover that his Iron Chancellor had become a pedagogue.

The point is the following: In the ninth and tenth centuries such a modification appears in European literature that we have begun to leave the Dark Ages behind and are coming to the threshold of the modern world. This is indeed a metamorphosis.

We can ascribe the change to causes unknown to us and make up a picture to please our idle whim, or we can seek and find the reason for the change in certain definitely known facts. I prefer the latter course.

"Notker und Hrotsvit verdanken ihr bestes dem mimus," says Winterfeld. I should put it differently and say that when these artists depart from an over-ornamented style and the traditional method which their day used for recording facts and themes, then they owed this "best" neither to a mime nor to any model of their own time, but to themselves. It was possible to be one's self in prose and poetry before the year 1000, though it must be admitted the deed seems to have been hard of accomplishment. The greatest service Ker has done the Latin authors of the Dark Ages is the emphasis of this important fact. Here and there in the hisperic weaving of early Latin literature Ker has found threads of a color so bright, so near to the hues of everyday life, that there seems to be nothing "dark" or "mediaeval" about them. Before Notker ever wrote his *Gesta Karoli*, Gregory of Tours had told of things "that might go straight into a ballad," Gregory the Great had provided great treasure of vivid legend in his *Dialogues*, Ermoldus had so pictured a siege of Barcelona that it was instinct with dramatic truth.

When we read Notker we know what we shall find—a struggling poet, narrow in view, awkward in performance, incoherent in statement. He lacks a hundred things that modern art is heir to. He does not care to, or he cannot, throw off the shackles of his day. But therefore to imagine that in some happy moment of self-forgetfulness he could not depart from his conventional pose and hold us by the simple force of realistic portrayal—unless he purloined his portrayal from a mime—that is to imagine the ninth century as wide and empty as the Hell of Wettin; that is to make of the great monastery of St. Gall a leaden ark.¹

¹ I wonder would Winterfeld have ascribed to a mime the verses of a monk writing in his cell (St. Gall MS, ninth century): "The woodland meadow incloses me, the song of

I. MIMUS AND SHORT NARRATIVE

Fable, fairy-tale, fableau, storiette

From the ninth century on there existed in Germany a great many fables and stories and droll tales which were widely disseminated and very popular. These short narratives are of two sorts: (1) those which are evidently German in origin and workmanship, so far as we may judge by their scenes and motives; (2) those which are perhaps of oriental lineage because they seem to derive from or be kin to themes in the older literature of the South and East.¹

For the first sort no explanation is needed—they are quite simply the work of monks and clerks and minstrels who invented them or who gave them literary form. But for the second sort a problem is felt to exist. Oriental tales in Europe two centuries before the first crusade are felt to be an anachronism. Led astray, therefore, by the romantic suspicion that the ninth century was unlettered, untraveled, and uncreative—tormented by their inability to explain the presence of oriental tales and fables in Germany long before any well-known route of immigration is open—critics have succumbed. They have either assumed a more constant and direct line of transmission between East and West than other evidences seemed to warrant—such as one due to the Byzantine alliances of the Ottos—or they have clutched at the Italian mimus to stop the gap between, say, the Carolingian renaissance and the period of chivalry.

The Italian entertainer may be directly and indirectly responsible for a few of the tales and legends that were current in ninth-century Germany. We know that the great pageants (*circenses*) continued in Italy until late in the migration period at least, and Glock is right in assuming that “the shout which a famished multitude in

the blackbirds echoes in my ears as I sit at my parchment . . . from the tree-summits the cuckoo in his gray cowl calls to me with clear voice. Oh, in truth, 'tis goodly writing here under the forest's roof!” (Kuno Meyer, *Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, xi, 1 [1909] p. 81.)

Here we find a tonsured monk pausing a moment in his appointed task of multiplying sacred texts—dull business!—to speak simply of the world beneath his grated window. Formal diction based upon classical tradition and biblical imagery is left aside, and for a few human breaths *a man is writing as he feels*. No descendant of an Italian vaudeville-performer is in his mind or by him as he writes—we may be sure of this. And not every ninth-century monk was a Johannes Talpa of Beargarden (for the writings of which worthy cf. MS Bibl. nat., fonds ping. K. L.⁶, 12390 quater—or if this cannot be found, Anatole France, *L'île des pingouins*, Book III, chap. iv).

¹ Cf. Kögel *Gesch. d. deut. Lit.* I, ii, 192 ff. and the quotation there made from Wilamowitz' introduction to his *Hippolytos*.

ancient Rome joined to the one for bread then sounded forth not less loud from the lips of immigrant Germans." But the more interested the German in the *mimus*, the sooner would he learn his trick from him. Even if the German had no realistic poetry before he went to Rome, it would not be long before the rote of it was learned and transplanted deep into the heart of Germany. Thus, even if the original impulse in any instance came from without, it would be, I think, as early as the fifth or sixth century¹ that German poets and their audiences had long forgotten how certain very popular themes came from a foreign source. History teaches us constantly how short a span it takes for the naturalization of extraneous material.

There is, however, no positive knowledge in our possession that such oriental cognates as we find in the short narratives in Germany from the ninth century on were ever appropriated by Italian mimes. These narratives—fables, fairy-tales, fableaux, *storiottes*, and legends—are, generally speaking, not the type of thing which the mimes would use to amuse barbarian crowds. It must never be forgotten that the *mimus* is made by Reich, Winterfeld, and Heyne the agent of transmission solely to suit their convenience, and not because of any evidence which they can discover. The *mimus* has been "clutched at" as is a straw by one drowning.

I can explain to my thorough satisfaction the presence of any shorter narrative in ninth-century Germany with never a thought of *mimus*. Two great lines of direct connection between East and West at this period are known: books and monasteries.

Anthologies, MSS of excerpts and *exempla*, collections of apologies and *facetiae* and tales, the profaner parts of sacred legends and saints' lives, stirring homilies and dramatic sermons, books like the *Vitae patrum*²—here we have the broad and unfailing river of tradition which flowed from the past into the Dark Ages. The monks knew of these things, but there the matter might have rested, had it not been for the great institutions in which they dwelt.

¹ The story of the withered arm of King Miro's *mimus* may be a case in point. The occurrence (A.D. 589?) is told not by the *mimus* but of him and evidently by one who dislikes him, perhaps a Frankish minstrel; cf. *Modern Philology*, VI, 402.

² Many another poem may have found its theme herein as did the satire on Little John the Monk; cf. *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, XIV, 469; Winterfeld, *Stilfragen*, 21; Allen, *Modern Philology*, V, 468.

Reichenau, Fulda, Tegernsee, St. Gall, Gandersheim, and Weissenburg—these are but the greatest of the many places in which monk lived with lay-brother, clerk, and student. Now the monastery was not only the house of a religious order, not only a church. It was a school, a university, an inn, a house of refuge, a place of pilgrimage, a hospital, a conservatory of music, a library, a center of culture, and a social focus. So men of every sort came to pass through its walls, to remain a while within them. It housed sovereign and Jew, peddler and soldier, poet and minstrel, artisan and artist, the great man on embassy of state, the humble monk back from a far journey.

In the stir and bustle of this Temple of the Muses, in the sparks which inevitably come from the friction of awakened minds,¹ in imaginations quickened to the facts of life by such companionship with books of the past and men of the present—here should I seek the reason for what would seem to have been a new-fashioned literary realism, and not in the repertory of isolated bands of Italian vaudeville-artists. We need wait for such realism only until the poet comes. And such a one was Notker Balbulus.

Notker was the genius of St. Gall, and he lived in the ninth century. These two facts, it seems to me, explain the whole body of his literary effort. Being the genius of St. Gall, he outstripped all men of his day in writing sequences, he told in a droll way the tales of Eishere, of the Goblin and the Farrier, of the Bishop and the Jew, he wrote fables like the Three Brothers and the Goat, the Flea and the Podagra. All this shows that he saw life at times simply, allowed his Swabian humor to enter an occasional story and gild it, had an eye for the value of terse and dramatic treatment of popular themes, and was possessed of much sense and feeling.

¹ The story of the greatness of St. Gall is told in Ekkehard IV's *Casus S. Galli*; see Schubinger, *Die Sängerschule St. Gallens* (1858); Winterfeld, *Ilbergs Neue Jahrbücher*, V, 350 ff.; and Gautier, *La poésie liturgique*. It goes without saying that the aesthetic culture which characterized some of the courts of the more important episcopal prelates in the tenth century was the direct fruit of monastic culture. For the new expressions in art and literature which an awakened social activity found in the valley of the Loire toward the end of the tenth century, cf. Warren's suggestive sketch of society under Robert the Pious (987-1031) and the many sources of information which he cites (*Publ. Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, XVII, [1909], "Proceedings," xlviii ff.). It is not without a feeling of amazement that we learn of the existence at this time in French territory of five hundred abbeys and *ecclesiae collegiatae*, many of which were centers of the new light; cf. Lot, *Etudes sur le règne de Hugues Capet et la fin du Xe siècle* (1903), 427-42.

But living as he did in the ninth century, Notker was often prone to follow traditional methods in his writing—at such a moment the worst traits of the pedant and the cloister-schoolmaster shone forth from him; he was crude, unbending, artificial. He was unwittingly—poor monk!—paying toll to his age. So did Chaucer in stupid Melibeus.

Notker the ninth-century monk Winterfeld believes requires no explanation. Notker the genius of St. Gall—except for the sequences—Winterfeld calls *mimus*. He says:

The fable has ever been cousin-german to the *mimus*.¹ The main point, however, is that all the preachers and collectors of exempla are pupils of the *mimus*,² for they surely recognized the effective element in the *mimus*³ and because they could not do away with his influence⁴ they at least made use of it. It is a sign of Notker's greatness that he was the first artistic poet of the Middle Ages to weld together with instinctive sureness the *mimus* and artistic poetry.⁵ But while Notker only borrows for his purpose the *mimic novelette*⁶ Roswitha does the same thing with the drama.⁷ Then came the time when the *mimus*⁸ repaid Notker for making him again a literary possibility. The *mimus*⁹ with his sure feeling for what was enduring in artistic poetry took possession of the sequence-form which artistic poetry had created.

It is possible that in my footnotes to this quotation of Winterfeld's I have not entirely got at his meaning—but I have at least shown how preposterous a list of things he attaches to the one concept *mimus* in a few sentences. I should rewrite his quotation as follows:

The fable has ever been a popular form of expression among illiterate peoples. Early mediaeval preachers found most effective to illustrate their points and hold the attention of their audience these fables and short popular tales, so they made use of them. Notker is the first real

¹ Winterfeld here must mean by *mimus* "realistic poetry," unless he thinks fable and recited *mimus* related.

² *Mimus* here evidently = an Italian teller of stories.

³ *Mimus* here = the Italian's repertory.

⁴ The Italian teller of stories again.

⁵ *Mimus* here = realism, realistic art, real life itself, as an antithesis to artistic writing.

⁶ *Mimische novelle* here = the *novelette* whose theme Reich derives from *mimic drama*, like the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius.

⁷ Roswitha does not. In one place she is said to have her theme from a heathen martyr *mimus*, in another place from the *Vitae patrum*.

⁸ This time a minstrel who sang.

⁹ A minstrel.

poet we know of who gave such popular tales artistic form. Roswitha did the same sort of thing in a legend or two, but never in her dramas. Once Notker had shown how the sequence (text and music) added unsuspected richness to the church-service, other poets adopted the same form when writing of profane matters.

In all of Notker as we know him, in anything that has ever been ascribed to him, we find no reference to, no reminiscence of, Italian vaudeville or entertainers. Once in a while—for all too short a moment—Swabian Notker succeeds in being simple, warm, true, or funny. That is all.

II. MIMUS AND LONG NARRATIVE

Ruodlieb

Ruodlieb is often called the first novel in European literature, and novel in a certain sense it is, for it gives us a picture of the social life of its time.¹ But so far as its structure is concerned it is no novel, but a collection of novelistic episodes loosely strung

¹ An ancient creed to which we unthinkingly subscribe is that courtly and artistic expression sprang from the life of a time later than that of this novel, from a new order of things which appeared in twelfth-century Europe. Cf. for instance Langlois, *Origines et source du Roman de la rose*, p. 2: "This courtly literature should be born in the twelfth century. At this epoch woman began to take rank in the society of northern France. She emerges from the isolation to which she has long been abandoned; she finds an environment in which she can exercise the sway of her charm, one which her finer and more delicate spirit inspires with new sentiments. A courtly intercourse is established between persons of the opposite sex."

I have no quarrel with Langlois's words, for it is true that a revolution in European poetry did follow the change in the social life of the people in the twelfth century. And yet what is there in the social life of the eleventh century, *as we generally understand it*, which would prepare us for the courtly element in *Ruodlieb*? Scherer says truly: "Loud laughter is already proscribed; a moderate merriment and gentle smiles are demanded of women by etiquette. Good breeding is denoted in the very manner of their bearing. The majesty of woman is felt at least aesthetically and expressed in a simile which often recurs in later German poetry: a woman in the flower of her youth is like the moon; a girl approaching is like the rising of the shining moon."

"And humane sentiment, the source of which lies always in a respect for women, makes itself felt repeatedly throughout the poem; the cruelty of the tenth century is gone. The judge shows himself merciful to the fallen but repentant woman. The victor in battle spares the conquered foe. Victory alone is honor enough; be a lion in the fight but a lamb in revenge; small honor attaches to him who avenges a suffered wrong; revenge in its truest sense is to subdue one's wrath. Men begin to grow modest and to use their power scrupulously; the king of Africa accepts but little of the gift which the conquered enemy offers him; our hero wins unwillingly at chess. Hospitality and benevolence are virtues highly to be praised. Widows and orphans receive the fullest tribute of sympathy, and it is a knightly duty to protect them. Tender affection for one's family, an intimate relationship between parents and children, these are the true signs of good people."

What truer testimony do we wish, to know that the conditions of the eleventh century are scarcely as we have dreamed them to be?

together on the name and not the personality of its hero—it is a mediaeval *Wilhelm Meister*.

With the courtly element in *Ruodlieb* I shall not deal. But I desire to emphasize it at the beginning, to show how much of the novel is based upon the real observation of its author, and therefore owes nothing to Winterfeld's omnipresent "mimus."

The problem of the popular element in *Ruodlieb*—of that part of it wherein the most incongruous novelistic materials are gathered but not welded together: fableau, storiette, legend—is no different from the problem involved in the preceding section, I. We find a monk like Notker or Ekkehard I at work incorporating in the best artistic form he could the humbler literature which the books and the oral tradition of his time gave him. The materials of the novel which Winterfeld would have revert to *mimus* are the following:

1. Three merchants murdered in a notorious inn.
2. The dog who unerringly recognizes a thief.
3. The trained bears.
4. The hero's skill with the harp.
5. The exchange of identity between young lovers.
6. The dance of this young couple.
7. The adultery of Red Pate and a young wife.

With 5 and 6 I need not pause, for Winterfeld's contention regarding them is too weak to require refutation.¹ No. 7 he derives straight from an adultery-mimus as played in Rome. The scene in *Ruodlieb* where Red Pate blusters and threatens to break in the door does not come, we are told, from either Plautus or Terence (cf. the scenes of Thraso in the *Eunuch*), "for in these sources, as in the Greek comedies from which they borrowed, the inviolability of the married woman is respected." But in the mimic drama it is just the married woman to whom the spruce seducer (*cultus adulter*) makes his advances. If the wife will but grant Red Pate her favors, he promises

¹ No. 5 Winterfeld derives from *mimus* only because it has a remote analogy with a passage in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan und Isolde*, whose French sources are somewhat indebted to fableaux and Achilles Tatius, and with an episode in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (which Reich calls "an old *mimus*"). No. 6 (*ille velut falcho se gyrat, et haec ut hirundo*) Winterfeld believes to be a "mimic animal-dance" like those cited by Reich, Vol. I, 476 ff. Even if Ferdinand Wolf were right—and he is not—in presuming that in the tenth century beast-fables were given "mimic portrayal" in the cloisters (*Ueber die Lais, Sequenzen und Leiche*, 238 f.), I can see no connection between the dance of our young couple and those of Roman *paenion*.

her a fine, brisk lover: "I know the young sprig for you—one just tall enough, with yellow locks, slim and graceful, with red cheeks and bright eyes." This, we are told, is the typical walking juvenile of mimic story. The Red Pate, it seems, "is thus playing the added rôle of go-between (*cata carissa*, procuress) so common in dramatic and recited mimus. The shamelessness of the amorous dalliance indulged in also smacks of mimic repertory, so does the knot-hole (in mimic performances a broken wall) through which the old husband spies upon the matter."

I confess that these so-called resemblances between No. 7 and the Roman mimus tend to discourage me with Winterfeld. A knot-hole in *Ruodlieb* is no more a broken wall from Rome than is the crack in the partition through which Roswitha's maidens view Dulcitius. We cannot credit the "mimic drama" with all the eaves-dropping devices of modern drama and story: holes, cracks, hedges, practicable rocks, trees. And as to *cultus adulter*, *cata carissa*, the walking juvenile, and amorous dalliance—there is nothing discoverably "mimic" here. What the author of *Ruodlieb* had before him as source—if any source was there—is nothing more than one of the thousand *dorfgeschichten* of his day:

A dishonest soldier of fortune—the red hair is a symbol to the mediaeval mind—came storming and blustering up to the house where he had heard a young wife dwelt with an old husband. This poor rustic beauty, sullen over her mismated condition, gladly lent herself to the deception that the braggart was near kin to her, and when promised a fine young lover readily granted her person to the intruder. Red Pate carries matters shamelessly and finally murders the protesting husband. He and his paramour are brought to the scaffold, where the broken woman confesses all, is released on the intercession of her stepsons, and goes home to lead a life of expiation for her crime.

Why speak of Thraso and archmimus? The red-pate blusters and pretends to cousinship, that he may put his affair through with a high hand. Why speak of the inviolate marriage-bed of Greek comedy? The wife in *Ruodlieb* is quite in rôle with all the *mal mariées* of popular tradition in mediaeval Europe. Why assign the best portrayal of low life in Germany before Meier Helmbrecht to a "mimic" original? For no honest reason that I can discover.

I regret the length of my occupation with this single theme, but

as it is I have barely escaped the temptation to show how favorite a theme the seduction-remorse story was in mediaeval comedy and fableau which by no manner of reasoning can be derived from Roman mimus. As for Winterfeld's contention regarding the four other themes, it does not hold water. The hero who is skilful with the harp is in many a *spielmannsepos*—Rother, for instance. The trained bears and the intelligent dog are commonplaces in the eleventh century, as in every other before or since. They smack of the wandering minstrels, it is true, but there is nothing in their description which suggests that the descendants of Roman mimi were abroad in Germany after the first millennium of the Christian era. The three merchants murdered in an inn is a story which appears in many places, as Seiler has industriously shown. Now this is all as we should expect; it accords with what we know from many a source outside of *Ruodlieb*: viz., that humble and popular forms of entertainment and story existed in Europe during the last of the Dark Ages at least, for they were at that time set forth in conscious and artistic poetry and prose. But it does not mean that all the types of Roman mimus and performers of mimus endured across the migration period and gave the impulse for every sort of modern realism.

I do not know from where the thousand themes came which enriched the literature of the Middle Ages, nor need I know. I readily grant that some of them were ever on the way northward from Rome. The trained bears, I confess, may have had remote ancestors in the *circenses* in Rome, so may their trainer. But this is not the question at issue. The question is, was there a continuous tradition in Germany from fourth century to eleventh¹ of Roman

¹ Winterfeld makes much of the fact that a passage from Sextus Amarcus (chap. i, 403-43) tells how the people from villages in the neighborhood and from the country-roads stream in to hear a mimus sing to the accompaniment of a zither several Latin songs, one of which deals with the subtle theory of Pythagoras. He urges that this is sufficient evidence that the whole interest of the villagers lay in the music. True enough—although he might have added that yokels find interest in anything out of the usual run if it costs them nothing—and in this case the fine gentleman dining at the inn paid for the mimus. Nothing in Amarcus tells us that the bystanders stayed long to listen. They may have crowded up expectant of magic or an obscene tale in German, and dwindled away before their disappointment.

Winterfeld would account for the propagation of Latin songs in unbroken continuity from early migration times in Europe until the middle of the eleventh century by saying that their musical settings won a constant welcome for them even in ages and at places where people could not understand the texts. This might, I suppose, account

mimic types and artists, but for whom mediaeval living poetry and prose would not have been born. And I say at this point, that so far as we may judge by the records already studied: no.

III. MIMUS AND ROSWITHA

Legend and Drama

As Winterfeld's edition of Roswitha's works¹ is the result of eleven years of labor, and as he allows no possible analogy to the mimus to escape him,² I shall content myself with studying the matter of her indebtedness to Italian vaudeville and performer along the lines which he has blazed.

The first legend in which Roswitha shows that she possesses humor, according to Winterfeld, is her *Gongolf*. It contains an episode which pictures a "three-haired" simpleton licking up the sand in his search for the lost spring:

- 185 Cumque lacum peteret fundumque siti reprobaret,³
 Qui quondam validis luxuriavit aquis,
 Usque solum stratus, vacua spe non bene lusus,
 Coepit arenosa lingere nempe loca,
 190 Temptans, exiguam posset si lambere guttam;
 Sed nec praesiccam tinxerat hinc ligulam.

Now it is true that in *paegnion* the mimus was often bald, and equally true that our simpleton resembles the mimus in this one respect almost to a hair, but I should not care to base Roswitha's dependence upon Roman vaudeville on so scant a foundation. Winterfeld says that Roswitha's fool is the real type of mimic *stupidus*, and so he is, but only as a million other fools have been. There is no trait or act of this fellow which would identify him as a for the perpetuation of a very few musical settings—though it is hard to believe even they could be carried across so many centuries of distress and change—but it could not account for such texts as those of the Cambridge MS, for instance, two of which this very minstrel of Amarcus sings.

No, Amarcus' *jocatur* is not the eleventh-century descendant of an Italian mimus, unless he is that *rara avis*, a white blackbird. He is a *spielmann* with a varied store of goods, like Der Marner, who had Latin songs of his own to sing for the asking; cf. *Modern Philology*, VI, 400.

¹ *Hrotsvithae opera* (1902).

² "Und froh ist wenn er Regenwürmer findet," like the man of whom Faust speaks. It is such scholastic seriousness which gives much point to Wackernagel's "Die Hündchen von Bretzvil und von Bretten," *Kleinere Schriften*, I (1872), 423 ff. and to a French abbé's derivation of Napoleon from Apollo (Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*).

³ Strecker emends 185 to *sitire* (i.e., *arere*) *probavit*.

particular type of simpleton and make him definite blood-kin of the mimic fool.

Winterfeld goes on to say that this tale of the lost spring lives in Hessian territory today,¹ but "hardly without the co-operation of the mimes." I object to this phrase. It is decorative bye-work and should be expunged from the record. I can make the same statement with equal right of the Grimm legends which rest on an old basis, and my statement would mean as much as Winterfeld's—which is nothing at all. I can thread my leisurely way through Rabelais, say, and wherever I find a fool of the numskull order, one whose typically thick pate the great Frenchman so loved to belabor, I can say: "er ist der echte typus des mimischen stupidus," but that would not be proving any necessary connection between Rabelais's clown and Roman *paegnon*.

Roswitha took the theme for her *Basilius*-legend from the *Vitae patrum*, a book which contained a vast deal of narrative material which the Dark ages found entertaining, a book which long furnished, says Winterfeld, "mimes and story-tellers with subjects." A little farther on Winterfeld again uses the word *mimus* to characterize the author of a minstrel-leich (late tenth or early eleventh century) whose theme somewhat resembles that of Roswitha's legend, and which was therefore also presumably borrowed from the *Vitae*.

There is no argument here. The *Vitae patrum* had a great grist of good story-plots in it—minstrels borrowed them, so apparently once did Roswitha. One minstrel-leich is somewhat similar in tone to one of Roswitha's legends. Ergo, Roswitha's source is *mimus*. It does not seem possible that this is all the meat of Winterfeld's argument, but it is. I shall not even ask my reader what he thinks of such work.² So much for her legends in narrative form.

¹ Wolf, *Hessische Sagen*, No. 208; Lyncker, *Deutsche Sagen und Sitten in hessischen Gauen gesammelt*, No. 121.

² At this point Winterfeld inserts a discussion of the similarity between the legend of Venantius Fortunatus dealing with Bishop Germanus (died 576) and a novelette of Apuleius. There is no reason why we should doubt Venantius' obligation in this matter, but why should a sixth-century Italian poet not have known his Apuleius? Surely this does not speak for a Roman *mimus*. "But," says Reich, "Apuleius got much of his material from *mimi*" (*Der Mimus*, I, 35; Reich's second volume, he announces, will deal with the indebtedness to *mimus* of satire, novel, story, and epistle). Even then, it was still from a literary source that Venantius got his theme and not from direct contact in the Merovingian realm with a *mimus*. But suppose Venantius did

Roswitha's so-called dramas are of course nothing but *legends in crude dialogue-form*. Terence, to whom she refers in a famous passage, meant only one thing to her: dramatic dialogue. To realize how little she understood Roman comedy, how far she missed its meaning and its art, one has but to read Roswitha's legends in dialogue-form. In what follows I shall refer to these productions as "dramas" to prevent misconception of my argument, but dramas they are not, nor dramatic sketches, and it is not the nature of their subjects which prevented their being acted by nuns, or, as one genial critic has suggested, by the mimi—mimi in the Harz Mountains!—but the nature of their substance. If *Sapientia* was ever staged, then were *Rollo and His Uncle* and *Sanford and Merton*. If my reader consider it a quibble to insist Roswitha's dialogues were not dramas, let me inform him that Winterfeld twice speaks of Roswitha and Shakespeare as one speaks of two members of the same family,¹ and once compares her with Goethe.

get the theme in this latter way, I should scarcely argue that what was the case with the last great writer of Silver Latinity in the sixth century was in any sense the case with a Gandersheim nun in the tenth.

¹ Scherer says: "She had the eye for stage-effects, for telling theatrical themes. Many a species of later drama finds in her its prototype. *Gallicanus*, for example, is a historical tragedy, *Dulcitius* verges upon farce, *Abraham* would seem to pave the way for bourgeois drama, *Callimachus* gives us a love-tragedy with the oddest similarity to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*." Such statements are most misleading, as we discover when we find for instance that the final scene in *Callimachus*, where the protagonist is only withheld from an unnatural crime upon the dead body of Drusiana by divine interposition, "reminds one of the grave-scene in Shakespeare's play"; when we discover what is the sequence of events in *Sapientia*, the doublet of *Dulcitius*. I choose this piece, because it illustrates to the best advantage the truth that Roswitha's so-called plays are only legends in dialogue. "Her dialogue is lively," says Scherer, "her speeches are never too long, she often knows how to build her scenes cleverly." When the emperor Hadrian asks the mother how old her children are, she propounds him a riddle in arithmetic which consumes at least ten minutes and is more difficult than its modern derivative: "How old is Ann?" It develops that Fides is 12, Spes 10, and Caritas 8. Then the "action" proceeds. Fides, who will not renounce her faith, is lashed till her flesh hangs in strips, but it doesn't matter; her breasts are cut off, but the blood doesn't flow; she is put into a kettle of flaming pitch, but somehow it doesn't hurt. Then the emperor grows weary and hews off her head. Likewise Spes, who will not renounce her hope. Likewise Caritas, who insists on preserving her charity at all hazards. Is this drama? Even if we relegate to "action off stage" the heating of the kettle which consumes three days and three nights and the overflowing of the kettle which kills five thousand people? No, it is legend such as we find persevering with an obstinacy worthy of a better cause until the fifteenth century at least. An early exemplar is the tale of the martyrdom of St. George (Müllenhoff-Scherer, *Denkmäler*, No. xvii; Zarneke, *Berichte der sächsischen Gesellschaft* [1874], 1 ff.; Scherer, *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, XIX, 104 ff.; Seemüller, "Studie zu den Ursprüngen der altdutschen Historiographie," *Festgabe für Heinzel* [1898], 311 ff.) which, in the few fragments preserved to us, puts St. George through the following sample tests: He is bound, broken on the wheel, torn into ten pieces, but he goes

Callimachus Winterfeld dismisses with the phrase: "hier ist für den mimus nichts zu holen," but he dwells the longer with *Dulcitius*. In an earlier essay¹ I suggested that the pots-and-pans scene from this drama reminds the reader of a fableau (*schwank*), ignorant at the moment that Winterfeld discovered in it a remarkable analogy to the episode in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* where the queen of the elves, struck with blindness, like that of *Dulcitius* when he would visit the captive maidens, caresses the donkey-headed weaver. I still prefer my suggestion of a fableau as presumable source for Roswitha, and do not connect the scene with Titania on the one hand, or on the other with Apuleius' Golden Ass and so with the Roman mimic drama, as does Winterfeld, simply because *Dulcitius* is divinely overcome.

But not alone in this burlesque scene does Winterfeld seek an analogy for *Dulcitius* in the mimus. This and another martyr-legend in dialogue-form Winterfeld believes may revert to pagan martyr-mimes such as those mentioned by Reich² in connection with *Genesius*. I quote Winterfeld's statement:

Such a mimus, I think, Roswitha may well have known. If not this *Genesius*-mimus, then another one. Should she, however, have written her martyr-drama without such a prototype, then her dramatic genius appears only the greater. If no outward, direct connection with the martyr-mimus exists, then Roswitha has of herself created what before her and after her the mimus created. The material is, of course, not so constituted that we can decide from a single instance.

This statement is so disingenuous, so hides the points at issue, that it is difficult to believe an attempt has not been wilfully made to mislead us. There is no similarity whatever in theme, purpose, treatment, or appeal between Roswitha's dialogue-legends and the *Genesius*-mimus, or any other "christologic" mimus which Reich's unfettered imagination can shape from nebulae.

Roswitha was no "dramatic genius." If she had had even the on preaching. He is pulverized, cremated, his ashes are thrown into a well, great boulders heaped upon it, but he goes on preaching. This legend of St. George, although it does remind us of the poem "And the barber went on shaving," I do not regard as a parody by a *spielmann* on a religious theme; I think it is a "dramatic legend"—if its author had read Terence as Roswitha did, he might have "dramatized" it; which, being translated, means only set it to dialogue.

¹ Cf. *Modern Philology*, III, 431.

² *Der Mimus*, I, 87 f., 566.

glimmerings of that creative ability with which Winterfeld and other critics invest her, she would have understood Terence and given us some sort of play. She not only could not write a drama, she did not think of doing so. She wanted to give vivacity and life to the old style of legend, and she succeeded a little. What subject would be nearer her heart than the story of how God in his omnipotence overcame all the wiles of the devil and led trusting and tender maidens straight to him, without spot and without blemish?

The Genesius-mimus is exactly the kind of thing we might expect: ethnologia: character portrayal. An archmimus in the very act of blaspheming against the Christian life and believers is convicted of God and becomes stout in his new faith.

If we could trace the slightest resemblance of theme or diction between Roswitha's work and the Genesius-mimus, as critics think they can between the latter and a fifteenth-century Genesius-mystery play,¹ then the question would assume a different aspect. But we cannot.

The material for her *Abraham* Roswitha derives in part from the *Vitae patrum*. What we have said above regarding such borrowing need not be repeated.² But it seems that in connection with just such an elopement as that of Roswitha's Maria, Jerome cites a living instance in his letters to Eustochius and Sabellianus. He writes: "repertum est facinus, quod nec mimus fingere, nec scurra ludere, nec atellanus possit effari"—such impudence surpasses the fictions of the mimes. Such themes of elopement and remorse were naturally warm favorites with the mimi. It is interesting to note our nun calmly choosing from the whole repertory of legends at her disposal a story of this realistic kind. But these facts bespeak no indebtedness on Roswitha's part to Roman mimus. Nor does her obligation in *Paphnutius*, the other conversion-legend and doublet of *Abraham*, to the *Vitae patrum* establish any connection with mimus.³

¹ Edd. Mostert-Stengel; cf. von der Lage, *Studien zur Genesiuslegende* (1898 f.).

² Cf. *supra*, p. 40.

³ Gottfried Keller uses the same legend in his "Legende von dem schlimmheiligen Vitalis," remarking that it seemed as though in this theme "not only the ecclesiastical story-teller's art is manifest, but also traces of an earlier, more profane manner of narration." Winterfeld agrees that there is a good deal of worldly narrative-art in this legend, "or as we should say nowadays, a good bit of mimus, whether we were thinking at the time of dramatic mimus, or recited mimus, the story." For the moment mimus is meaning to Winterfeld *weltliche fabulierkunst*, *novelle*.

Winterfeld now pauses to compare Roswitha with Goethe, who in his *Götz von Berlichingen* "instinctively started as she did with mimus." The chameleon-word *mimus* we find in this place, however, does not mean a legend from the *Vitae patrum*, nor yet a novelette from Apuleius, but the puppet-theater. Since there is no claim for the marionette-play made by Winterfeld in connection with Roswitha's dramas, we need happily not concern ourselves further with it at this moment.

But Winterfeld has in mind yet another analogy between Roswitha and *mimus*—by whom he means this time the Roman teller of a story. Roswitha prefixes to certain of her works *periochae* (*pronuntiationes fabulae*), i.e., tables of contents of the ensuing drama or legend. Now the Roman *mimus*, like the later minstrels, found it convenient, in a time when there were no printed handbills, to instruct his audience in advance of the nature and theme of his story. It is a thing easily granted, that the producer in advertising his wares would gain effectiveness by sketching them beforehand, but so common a device as this has proved in all ages of simpler and directer art means nothing for Roswitha's knowledge of Roman *mimus*.

It is not far-fetched when from Roswitha's title to *Gallicanus* Winterfeld constructs the presumable way in which a *mimus* might act as "barker" (*marktschreier*) for it: "we are going to portray the marvelous history of Duke Gallicanus; Emperor Constantine promised him his daughter in marriage, etc." So might a minstrel have spoken in the Harz Mountains in the tenth century, true enough; so spoke the secondary *mimus* in Rome, waving his arms wildly to attract the attention of a careless crowd; so in our summer-evening calls through a megaphone the barker or capper for a tawdry show. But is this *mimus* or is it human nature? Both, Winterfeld would answer, for *mimus* means *das lebendige leben*.

His citation in this connection of the opening lines of the rhythm on Antichrist:

Quicumque cupitis audire ex meo ore carmina,
De summo deo nunc audite gloriosa famina
Et de adventu antichristi in extremo tempore

is likewise without point, unless one may include within the pale

of mimus scores of the most incongruous *periochae* from many different centuries and lands. Here is one such:

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

This sort of *pronuntiatio fabulae* could of course be multiplied indefinitely, and yet who would trace its source to mimus? Winterfeld would have done so, I believe, in all seriousness, for it is like the tables of contents in Roman mimic repertory. I should prefer not to, nor would I trace the short pantomime in *Hamlet*, which Ophelia imagines "shows the content of the piece."¹

And finally, in his study of Roswitha, Winterfeld asserts that she had chiefly portrayal in view, and that without much scenic apparatus "like her prototype the mimus." Of course she had, though her character-portrayal is generally weak enough, and her dramas were not acted. Quite as much of course the mimus likewise relied almost wholly upon character-delineation, and his productions were not acted.² But equally in this connection every reading drama—Tennyson, Browning—must be modeled upon the Roman mimus, if the mere absence of much scenic apparatus and action be the deciding hall-mark. Ah me!

IV. MIMUS AND DIALOGUE POEMS

There are eight dialogue-poems which with more or less violence it is customary to group together under the name of eclogues.³ I doubt the wisdom of such a title, for their sources, their subject-matter, and their appeal are so diverse that we cannot honestly feel them to belong to a single literary *genre* affected by learned Carolingian poets, even though they are chiefly written in leonine hexameters,⁴ a meter at this time popular with writers of the diocese of Rheims. These eight poems are:

¹ Winterfeld, *op. cit.*, 319.

² Cf. *Modern Philology*, VII, 330 ff.

³ Cf. Allen, *Modern Philology*, V, 440 ff.

⁴ Cf. Wilhelm Meyer, *Abhandlungen zur mittellateinischen Rhythmik*, I, 193 f.; Traube, *Karolingische Dichtungen*, 39 f.; *Poetae aevi Karolini*, II, 711; Hamilton, *Modern Philology*, VII, 171.

1. Imitations of the manner of Vergil's eclogues: the poem of Naso (Bishop Modoin of Autun, *ca.* 805)¹ and the *ecloga Theoduli* (Gottschalk of Orbais, *ca.* 865).² The first of these pictures two shepherds who alternate in singing the praises of Charles the Great in true Vergilian manner and has a reflected, if dimmed, glory in its lines. The second is a most prosy contest between the pagan shepherd Pseustis and the Christian shepherdess Alithia as to the superiority of their separate faiths.

2. Three necrologies eulogizing the virtues of ecclesiastics: the *ecloga duarum sanctimonialium* appended to Radbert Paschasius' Life of Adalhard of Corbie (died 826; the founder of Corvey), in which Philis and Galathea mourn the death of husband and father.³ Burchard of Reichenau's poem in praise of the abbot Witigowo (*ca.* 997).⁴ The *ecloga* which Agius (Poeta Saxo?) appended to the Life of Hadumod, his sister, who died as abbess of Gandersheim in 874.⁵ Of the three, Agius is the only one who achieves either pathos or poetry, when he subdues his own grief to comfort Hadumod's sorrowing nuns.

3. Two conflictus, one the contest between rose and lily by Sedulius Scottus (*ca.* 840), the other an anonymous struggle between summer and winter, sometimes attributed to Alcuin but presumably the dull school-task of one of his pupils. Both of these, I imagine, are reglossings of vernacular *streitgedichte*, the former allegorical in its symbolism, the latter pastoral (chorus of shepherds). They vacillate between a more correct diction modeled on learned sources like Vergil, the *disticha Catonis*, etc., and a rougher style which is apparently reminiscent of their popular source.⁶

4. Terence and the *delusor*.

¹ Dümmler, *Poetae aevi Karolini*, I, 384; *Neues Archiv*, XI, 77; Gröber, *Grundriss*, II, 157.

² Osternacher, *Theoduli ecloga* (1902); Vollmer, *Monatsschrift für die kirchliche Praxis* (1904), 321 ff.

³ Traube, *Poetae aevi Karolini*, III, 45; *O Roma nobilis* (1891), 14.

⁴ Gröber, *Grundriss*, II, 167. Because of this "eclogue," as well as because of twelfth- and thirteenth-century conflictus (Gröber, *op. cit.*, 391), I do not understand how Winterfeld can say: "The age of the eclogue is closely limited. It begins with Charles the Great and lasts barely a hundred years."

⁵ Traube, *Poetae aevi Karolini*, III, 369; Hüffer, *Korveier Studien*, I.

⁶ Cf. Traube, "Perrona Scottorum," *Münchener Sitzungsberichte* (1900), 495.

With this material before him Winterfeld asserts that it was in the eclogue-form alone that the artistic poetry of the Carolingian renaissance found its way to the mimus, to real life itself. In all other ways, he contends, the archaizing tendencies of this renaissance with its pretentious copying of ancient literature retarded mimus (*das lebendige leben*) because before Notker no poet, not even Walafrid Strabo, dared be himself. For the moment, then, Winterfeld thinks of mimus as realism.

Immediately, however, he turns to the mimes of Sophron, Theocritus, and Herodas. This sort of eclogue which they wrote, he says, was one of the forms of mimic poetry, accepted and popular for centuries because of its dramatic cast, its dialogue, and the naturalness with which it portrayed life. It was a recited mimus given by one person (often the poet himself¹) and a definite type of mimic literature.

Now this is true. But where in the list of eight eclogues of the Carolingian and later times do we find such mimi as those of Herodas or Theocritus? Modoin's and Gottschalk's poems we can in any sense whatever call mimi only because they were limping imitations of Vergilian eclogues, which in their turn were artificial (if beautiful) imitations of the manner of Theocritus' idylls. Neither Modoin nor Gottschalk ever wrote a real mimus, a recited poem, that is, which although dressed up for a court-audience was yet derived from the real life and characters of their own day. The only mimic thing in the work of either of them is that they used the dead husks of a dialogue-form and of the pastoral convention which had really had life instilled into it a thousand years and more before them.

Now as to Terence and the *delusor*. It looks little like an eclogue, for it is neither a vapid rewarming of the diction of Vergil, a retold vernacular *streitgedicht*, nor yet a cry of praise for a dead ecclesiastic; it is coarse, living, and filled with a note of rough bravado. I do not agree with Winterfeld that this farce was ever acted, for there is no proof on this point, despite what he would cite as stage-directions. And the source of it may be, as Rand thinks, occasioned by Terence's own retorts to Lanuvinus.² But if I did believe with

¹ Cf. Wilamowitz, *Hermes*, XXXIV, 207; Weil, *Journal des savants* (1891), 672.

² Cf. *Modern Philology*, VI, 404.

Winterfeld that different types of mimic performances survived in the Dark Ages in Europe, I should claim for this piece continuity with the Roman past and make it a main prop of my contention. For this is the first thing we have so far met in all our travels which would suggest in spirit and form Roman *paegnon*; if anywhere in Christian Europe there is an example of Roman slap-stick mime, here it is. Not in its original form, doubtless, any more than *Oxyrhynchus 413* is an original piece, but at least conceivably the derivative of an Italian original.

V. MIMUS AND HISTORICAL BALLAD

Widukind and Ekkehard tell us of the existence of many historical ballads of the ninth and tenth centuries.¹ In the former's history of the Saxons, for example, we are informed that in the year 915 Duke Henry of Saxony so annihilated the Franks "that the mimi chanted, Where is there a hell wide enough to hold so big a score of dead!"² *Mimus* here, of course, means a professional ballad-singer, and, since Lachmann at least, none has doubted that Widukind was referring to a phrase from a German historical folksong.

Another such *volkslied* from a previous generation is the song of the fight at Fontenoy (843)³ composed by "Angilbert who fought in the front rank and escaped alive alone of all those with him in the van." Now Winterfeld calls this Angilbert *mimus*, and again a *mimus* in the sense of ballad-singer he was, unless he lied, for he wrote a ballad. *Mimus* in any other sense (juggler, entertainer, court-jester, singer fresh from Italy) he was not.

Another historical ballad which Winterfeld assigns to a *mimus* is the one celebrating Pepin's victory over the Avari,⁴ written in the same style and the same meter as the Fontenoy song. This poem Winterfeld connects with a lost Latin ballad on the Iron Charles written by a Frankish minstrel (*mimus*), which is the basis for the story Notker tells us in the *Gesta Karoli*.⁵ In one place at least the

¹ Cf. Kelle, *Gesch. d. deut. Lit.*, I, 378 f.

² Widukindi, *Res gestae Saxonicae* ed. Waitz (1882); finished 968 A.D. with a short continuation a few years later. Ker (*Dark Ages*, 187) says: "Widukind had the national love of ballads. It is not difficult to find in his work traces of popular romance."

³ *Poetae aevi Karolini*, II, 138; Meyer von Knonau, *Ueber Nithards vier Bücher Geschichten*, 138 f.

⁴ *Poetae aevi Karolini*, I, 116.

⁵ Book I, chap. xvii.

monk changes the ballad, and Winterfeld tells us "it is high praise for the mimus that even a genius such as Notker can but spoil where he alters his original." Winterfeld's attempted reconstruction of the ballad is suggestive, but less convincing is his remark that it was always a profession known as *mimi* who composed ballads on the campaigns and fights in which they personally shared. Even the passage from Guy of Amiens (died 1076),¹

Histrio cor audax nimium quem nobilitabat,
Incisor-ferri mimus cognomine dictus,

which relates to the Norman Taillefer, need not find general application for all contingencies and occasions of the three previous centuries.

It would not be important to note this, if it were not that Winterfeld attempts to generalize widely from the poems on Fontenoy and the Avari. Their meter, he says, was the one used for all sorts of themes in sacred and secular balladry from the Merovingian times;² it was at the same time one of the commonest in Roman comedy and beloved by the mass of the people. The *mimi* of the Merovingian epoch, he believes, had greater poetic talent than the whole Round-Table of Charles the Great. He asserts that they handed down their work in the period long before 800 from father to son, from teacher to pupil—presumably an oral tradition, as the character of the transmission shows. The later copies which were written down are not by the *mimi* but by the monks, or copies of such work written down from memory.

Deriving straight then from the *mimi* of Rome, existing as a professional class of minstrels throughout the Merovingian days, fighting and singing for their masters, Winterfeld pictures the authors of our historical ballads and other secular lays. We may believe this or not as we will—the evidence does not prove it.³ All

¹ *Carmen de expeditione Wilhelmi*; Michel, *Chroniques anglo-normandes*, III (1840); *Monumenta historica Britanniae*, I, 856; cf. also Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, 8035, quoted by Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, I, 43.

² Wilhelm Meyer, *Der ludus de Antichristo*, 79.

³ Winterfeld has a way of omitting evidence which does not make for his contention of southern *mimi*: e.g., the story of the Lombard minstrel (*joculator ex Langobardorum gente*) who led Charles the Great over Mount Cenis and as a reward asked all the land to which the sound of his horn could penetrate; cf. *Chronicon Novaliciense* (*Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, VII, 73 ff.), written about 1050. Kögel thought to find traces of alliteration in the Latin prose translation of the chronicle; see also Schröder's "retranslation" in *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, XXXVII, 127.

we do know is that poets of one sort and another have left us a few ringing songs in the shape of battle-lays and popular songs; and naturally enough the Latin word commonly employed for such poets was *mimi*.

VI. MIMUS AND SATIRICAL SONGS

There is nothing in all the satirical poetry of Europe from the sixth century to the eleventh which hints at the existence of Italian *mimi* in this period. To be sure, Winterfeld cites and translates as the work of such *mimi* two satirical pieces: the tale of the abbot of Angers,¹ a rollicking drinking-song which deserves inclusion in the *kommersbuch*, and the quarrel in execrable rhythmic (rhymed?) prose of two Merovingian bishops, Importunus and Chrodebert.² The former is presumably of Charles the Great's time, the other about the year 665. We have no hint as to the author of either, he may have been a monk, a professional minstrel, or for that matter a man in any other walk of life. In so far, however, as he was known to the people of his time as author of such poetizing, he might be called *mimus*, for *mimus* was the Latin word in certain centuries for that sort of poet. Neither of them has any establishable connection with the Roman *mimus*; in fact, as both pieces seem to spring straight from the observance of contemporary occurrences, and to be the result of some animus on the part of those who wrote them, I should judge both to be the work of native authors who disliked most to see such abbots and bishops—the work of honest churchmen, perhaps.

The poet who lampooned the *mimus*—court-fool—of King Miro of Galicia in the sixth century was a Frankish minstrel, doubtless. He may or may not have had his training from Italy; there is no reason why he should have had or should not.³ The author of the

¹ Dümmler, *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, XXIII, 262, 265; Ebert, *ibid.*, XXIV, 147; Zarncke, *ibid.*, XXV, 25.

² Zeumer, *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi* (1886), 220; Paul Meyer, *Recueil des textes bas-latins*, 8. Krusch once called this "das wahrste Denkmal der Merowingerzeit." It was for work like this that Gregory of Tours once reproved King Chilperich as severely as if he had murdered people instead of rhythm. Cf. *Historia Francorum*, Book VI, chap. xlv: "confecitque duos libros quasi Sedulium meditatus, quorum versiculi debiles nullis pedibus subsistere possunt, in quibus, dum non intellegebat, pro longis sillabas breves posuit et pro breves longas statuebat; et alia opuscula vel ymnos sive missas, quae nulla ratione suscipi possunt"; Winterfeld, *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, XLVII, 73.

³ Heyne, *Alteutsch-lateinische Spielmannsgedichte des x. Jahrhunderts* (1900), xxiv; *Das alteutsche Handwerk* (1908), 110; Reich, *Der Mimus*, I, 826; Allen, *Modern Philology*, VI, 402; from *Opera Gregorii Turonensis*, edd. Arndt-Krusch, II, 651.

quip about Uodalrih, the brother-in-law of Charles the Great, was a Frankish minstrel likewise, at least it is from a German song translated into the Latin prose of Notker that we hear of him.¹

There is, further, no possible linking with Roman *mimus* of any of the other satirical quips and songs from early times: the mocking of Liubene's daughter, of the man from Chur, of timid count Hugo, of Little John the monk. Not only can a source in Roman *mimus* not be established for these pieces and for others slightly later in date,² but it would seem more reasonable to believe them the natural outcropping of the mood of the moment, of Swabian humor and sarcasm, or of equally effective French irony, than to refer them by indirection to Rome.

Now it is true, unfortunately true, that in his culture the mediaeval man belonged first of all to the church which was the *ecclesia catholica*,³ after that to his cloister, and that there are in his writings but few traces of his racial character. But when a keen sense discovers lurking beneath the dull exterior of inept mediaeval Latin some trace of native art, of provincial art, why then must we exchange this treasured birthright for the pottage of an Italian *mimus*?

VII. MIMUS AND SACRED BALLADS

One can scarcely forbear smiling at the oracular statement with which Winterfeld begins his argument that Roman *mimi* and their descendants wrote sacred ballads. "The church and its teachers had denounced the *mimus*," he says, "but had failed to suppress him." There can be no doubt of this, for many records tell the story. But Winterfeld continues: "Thereupon the church did not make its peace with the *mimus*, but a part of the *mimi* made theirs with the church. Such a rhythmic poem as Chilperic wrote about St. Medardus would be inconceivable except for the *mimus*, for the *mimus* had begun as early as the Merovingian epoch to clothe biblical and legendary material in this rhythmic form."

As no further explanation is vouchsafed us in the matter, we

¹ Müllenhoff-Scherer, *Denkmäler*³, No. viii.

² For further discussion of all such available early songs and bibliography of them cf. *Modern Philology*, III, 437; V, 44 ff.; VI, 402.

³ Cf. Winterfeld, *Stilfragen aus der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 12; Allen, *Modern Philology*, VI, 172 ff.

can only conclude that Winterfeld again refers to *mimus* as minstrel; not Roman minstrel, but any realistic poet. What he achieves thereby is problematical, unless he regards it as strange that all biblical legends were not told in metrical form, and by monks. Of the several legendary themes which he mentions, the most popular ones were those dealing with Antichrist and the descent of Christ into hell.¹ An example of the latter sort, an ABC-poem, speaks of the court of a king and tells us of the audience there gathered at Eastertide:

Abbati juncti simul et neophitae.
Hymnorum sonus modulantur clerici
Ad aulam regis et potentes personae;
Procul exclusit saeculares fabulas. . . .

abbots, those newly baptized, churchmen, influential laymen, sing hymns in the court of the king who has forbidden secular stories for the day; and in this aristocratic and pious company Winterfeld believes "the *mimus* too sings of Christ's death, of his descent into hell, and resurrection." But why *mimus*? Simply because the poem has a popular theme such as a minstrel might choose.

Other sacred materials of a popular sort Winterfeld for like reason ascribes to *mimus*: the poem on the destruction of Jerusalem which is worked out realistically after the manner of Josephus, so that not even the stench of the rotting corpses is left to our imagination; the story of St. Placidus which is treated so sympathetically as to be more effective than Herder's handling of the same theme in his *Wiedergefundener Sohn*; the poem on Antichrist over which there broods a mood like unto dark night at noonday, from whose lines a true poet speaks. Why *mimus*?

Just because here and there in sacred balladry a vivid picture, a real emotion, a direct and unvarnished diction appear; only because no canting monk is speaking, but some earnest poet-preacher who is talking better than his fellows in an early time. We shall never know who such authors were, but they are *mimi* only if that word denotes one of whatever walk of life, amateur or professional, who happens to write an effective rhythm on some religious legend.

¹ Cf. *Zeitschr. f. deut. Alt.*, XLVII (1903), 89; *Neues Archiv*, XXV, 406; Dreves, *Analecta hymnica*, II (1888), 91.

Surely in no other field of mediaeval writing should we be so surprised to see a song accorded the descendant of a Roman mimus, because of its realistic fervor, as in the field of sacred balladry. From the days of Augustine and Jerome at least to those of Bernard of Morlais the allurements and the rottenness of the world were depicted by poet-monks in a fashion more satirical and naturalistic than modern convention sanctions. There was that in the training and practice of monasticism which wrung the souls of strong men;¹ there was that in life as it was sometimes led in the Dark Ages which impelled clerks to an occasional materialism which sounds odd enough today. But that in all the sombre vision-literature, the dire prophecy, the grim poetry based upon Old Testament story and legend, there is not a ranker growth of materialism than actually exists—this fact may cause us to wonder, not the fact that there is any. It is to my mind no stranger that a Merovingian man of God should be a realist, than that a court-chaplain of the twelfth century should edit a codification of the *Rules of Love*, a book which enjoyed every whit of the authority of Cavendish on *Whist*, or that a Franciscan friar of the Renaissance should swear he had employed eighteen consecutive hours in copying Ovid's *De remedio amoris* and all "for the glorification of the Virgin Mary." We must take what we find without prejudice. The bishops Importunus and Chrodebert are living figures from an early age, even if their lineaments be somewhat distorted by the caricature in which we learn of them.

CONCLUSION

If we use the word mimus, as we should not, to mean any realistic and living portrayal in prose or poetry for one thousand years, then I believe that mimus is the source of mediaeval jongleur and spielmann, the fountain-head of Romance and Germanic literature.

If we use the word mimus, as we should, to mean such dramatic performances and actors, such vaudeville entertainers as existed in fifth-century Rome, then I believe the mediaeval mimi—minstrels and poets—had no connection with the southern mimus.

¹ Recall as a single example of such travail the poem *De monacho cruciatu in Hagen*, *Carmina mediæ ævi*, 178.

Such connection at least is nowhere visible in the poetry and prose of the European Dark Ages. And in all the chronicles and records from the writings of Jerome, Paulinus of Nola, and Salvianus of Marseilles down to the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury we may nowhere say surely what is meant by the loosely applied word *mimus*, unless the record particularly specify. Even then, as is the case with Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies*, we are often less wise than when we began.

EXCURSUS

MIMUS AND ITS SYNONYMS IN SAXO GRAMMATICUS

In studying the records from the fifth to the sixteenth century which refer to *mimus*, and its synonyms *scurra*, *histrion*, *scenicus*, *joculator*, we are confronted by a constant difficulty. For we are never sure of what any of these words means, except when it refers in a loose way to a popular but despised race of entertainers "*qui nil sciunt preter insanire*." There are four reasons for this:

1. The church councils which for many centuries published decrees against the *mimi* and their fellows were handed down from one generation to another in transumptis which were often almost identical in their phrasing. Because of this, and because of their failure to gloss the word *mimus* except by accompanying it with a long list of words which referred to all sorts of entertainers and dissolute people, we cannot ever judge from one of these decrees just what the status or occupation of the *mimus* was at any given time.

2. The church penitentials, naturally enough, viewed the activity of *mimi* from an ethical and not from a cultural point of view. We cannot therefore read from such records a sane statement of how any particular age regarded its entertainers; witness the description of Thomas de Cabham, for example.

3. It is frequently not safe to derive conclusions regarding the way in which an age fostered *mimi* from the writings of some historian of that age. Cassiodorus [sixth century], Leidrad of Lyons [eighth], Notker Labeo [tenth], John of Salisbury [twelfth] are good examples of this fact, which can be proved equally well by a score of other writers. For these men in discussing the *mimi* and their activities had in mind what the *mimi* of classical antiquity had

been, and borrowed much of their description of the mimi from classical sources, instead of giving us a picture drawn from the state of affairs in their own day.

4. We are often misled, almost universally misled, if we translate mediaeval mentions of *mimus*, *scurra*, *histrio*, etc., as their etymology would tempt us to. *Mimus*, that is, as it appears in monkish and scholastic Latin during the Middle Ages, does not mean pantomime or mimic portrayer; *scenicus* has nothing to do with stage; *histrio* no longer means actor, etc.

It is, then, labor lost to build up theories regarding the continuance of drama, farce, the art of acting, transmission of various forms of novel, romance, lyric, fable, from any or all of the manifold records regarding mimi, as we yet have them. It is not impossible that new sources of knowledge may be discovered which will tell their tale so clearly that we can use them to construct a more definite picture of the traditions of literary form in the Dark Ages than we now have. But, pending such new discoveries, and for the four reasons above given, we should be exceedingly slow to accept the rather fanciful portrayals of mimi in Europe quoted in the preceding parts of my study.

Now quite a number of the men who wrote about the mimi and their fellows must have known what they were talking about. It would, therefore, seem a foregone conclusion that if there had been at any time previous to the twelfth century, say, well-defined classes of mimi practicing various forms of a settled and traditional art, the historians [or some of them—or one of them] would have gladly given information of these matters. But this point, which apparently requires no proof, is slow to be accepted by many students of the origins of mediaeval literature, chiefly, I think, because they do not believe that men in central and northern Europe during the early Middle Ages could have recreated different literary types, except upon the basis of an inherited transmission of these forms from the south. Many students, thus, like Chambers and Reich, have studied the records not as they are, but as they should be. They have learned not for purpose of wisdom, but for argument and dialectic. And so they have found that for which they were searching, which is, after all, not surprising, for I have never yet

seen a critic approach the monuments of the Dark Ages with a fixed idea in mind without having his pre-conception almost instantly confirmed. "Seek and ye shall find!" is a philological axiom.

I have often wondered why the Danish history of Saxo "the lettered" has not been used to show what *mimus* meant to the Germanic peoples at least¹ during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For Saxo's references² have more value than any other ones I know, and for two reasons. First, we understand from the *Gesta*, more clearly than we do from any other chronicle I remember, the nature of the person and the circumstance which call forth the appellation *mimus* (*scurra*, *histrio*, *scenicus*, *joculator*); second, Saxo paints the scenes in which these five words are used so graphically that we cannot fail to catch his instant purpose. I append a short synopsis of these passages, because I believe they aid materially in establishing the fact that *mimus* at the beginning of the Middle Ages was a term of such general meaning that students cannot use it or its synonyms to directly further any theory which regards southern entertainers as the source of modern prose and poetry.

I [Holder, 185]. Starkad betakes himself to Hakon, tyrant of Denmark, because he is tired of the public wantonness of the dancers, their idle clatter, their ringing of bells, at the fair in Upsala when the city is crowded with strangers come to observe the season of carnival which accompanies the sacrifices.³ "Ad Haconem Danie tyrannum se contulit quod apud Upsalam sacrificiorum tempore constitutus, effeminatos corporum motus scenicosque mimorum plausus ac mollia nolarum crepitacula fastidiret."

¹ Although this restriction of the meaning of the word is doubtless unnecessary, for Saxo presumably employs the term *mimus* as other historians of his time did. The whole character of his writing shows him to have possessed some of the best of the learning of his day—there is small reason to think he had not acquired his training at a foreign university, Paris perhaps, like his contemporary, Anders Suneson, and many other cultured Danes. Why, then, argue that he spoke of *mimus* and the other words for entertainer except as any historian of his age—the close of the twelfth century—would have done?

² *Saxonis Grammatici Gesta Danorum*, ed. Holder (1886), 81, 133, 185, 186, 195, 203.

³ No account of the temple-feast at Upsala is given, but in Book XIV (Holder, 564 f.) Saxo describes the religious rites at a heathen temple in Rügen. The following lines picture the crowd and the carnival: "Semel quotannis, post lectas fruges, promiscua totius insule [i.e., Rügen] frequentia ante edem simulacre [Suanto-Vitus], litatis pecudum hostiis, solenne epulum, religionis nomine celebrabat. . . . His ita peractis, reliquum diei plenis luxurie epulis exigentes, ipsas sacrificii dapes in usum conuiuii et gule nutrimenta uertere, consecratas numini uictimas intemperantie sue seruire cogentes. In quo epulo sobrietatem uiolare pium estimatum est, seruare nefas habitum."

To translate "scenicos mimorum" with Elton¹ by "of the mimes on the stage" is unwarrantable, unless we dissociate from our idea of stage all thought of actor, play, and playhouse. It is true that in much earlier Latin the noun *scenica* meant "loca lusibus publicis addicta, ut sunt circi, theatra, et ejusmodi," but here as in two other passages in Saxo the adjective *scenicus* can mean only "idle, empty, wanton, dissolute." *Mimus* in the passage above quoted denotes a dancer, a noise-maker, and a ringer of bells (or one dressed in clothes hung with bells).

II [Holder, 186]. Starkad went with Hakon and his fleet to Ireland, whose king, Huggleik, was never "generous to any respectable man, but spent all his bounty upon mimes and jugglers (*mimos ac ioculatores*). For so base a fellow was bound to keep friendly company with the base, and such a slough of vices to wheedle his partners in sin with pandering endearments (*blandimentorum lenocinio*). Still he had Geigad and Swipdag, who, by the singular luster of their warlike deeds, shone out among their unmanly companions (*effeminatorum consorcia*) like jewels embedded in ordure. When a battle began between Huggleik and Hakon, the hordes of mimes (*mimorum greges*), whose lightmindedness unsteadied their bodies, scurried off in panic. Starkad conquered, killing Huggleik and routing the Irish; and he had any of the actors (*quoscumque ex histrionibus*) beaten whom chance made prisoner; thinking it better to order a pack of buffoons (*scurrarum agmen*) to be ludicrously punished than to take their lives. Thus he visited with a disgraceful chastisement the baseborn throng of jugglers (*iocularis ministerii*)." I have purposely quoted the translation of Elton, because it employs the technical words indicating different professions: mime, juggler, actor, buffoon. But Elton has translated these terms into the passage, not out of it. Saxo calls the rabble of parasites which composes Huggleik's army *mimi*, *ioculatores*, *histriones*, and *scurrae*, just as he denominates them "partners in sin," "panders," "vicious," "ordure," "lightminded," and "base"—to show what a herd of swine they were. Just as we use the names of certain of the most disgraceful professions today as a term of harsh reproach, with never a thought of the professions themselves, so they did in the twelfth century—so undoubtedly man has always done.

¹ Cf. Elton, *The First Nine Books of the Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus* (1894), 228.

III [Holder, 203]. Starkad is sulking at the table of King Ingild, son of Frode IV of Denmark. Ingild's queen, to soothe him, bade a piper (*tibicine de industria*) strike up. But "the crestfallen performer learnt that it is in vain for buffoons to assail with their tricks (*frustra scurrarum lusibus attentari*) a settled sternness. Starkad flung the bone, which he had stripped in eating the meat, in the face of the harlequin (*gesticulantis*) and drove the wind violently out of his puffed cheeks. By this act he showed how his austerity loathed the clatter of the stage (*scenicos plausus*). This reward, befitting an actor (*dignum histrione*), punished an unseemly performance. None could say whether the minstrel (*mimus*) piped or wept the harder. Then, to revile the actor (in *histrionis suggillationem*) more at length, Starkad composed a song." Again, as in the preceding quotation, professional names, *mimus*, *scenicus*, *scurra*, *histrionis*, and all to indicate what? A piper. Nowhere better than here can we see how little the heaping-up of lists of class-names so dear to mediaeval chronicles betokens a catalogue of different professions. A second time Elton's translation of "*scenicos*" by "stage" instead of by "idle" or "wanton" is unconvincing. The next paragraph decides the matter.

IV [Holder, 81]. Odin has been told by Rostioph the Finn that a son must be born to him by Rinda, daughter of the king of the Ruthenians. So the god disguises himself as a woman and pretends to be something of a physician. Rinda falls sick, and her father consents to her being bound, as so bitter a drug is prescribed for her by the deceitful Odin that she otherwise could not endure its effects. While she is unconscious Odin accomplishes his dishonest purpose. Because of his assuming the garb of a woman and because of his wanton practices many people adjudged him unworthy to return from his ten years' exile and resume his rank, since he had brought the foulest scandal on the name of the gods. "*Exitire tamen, qui ipsum recuperande dignitatis aditu indignum censerent, quod scenicis artibus et muliebris officii suscepcione teterrimum diui nominis opprobrium edidisset.*" Even in this place Elton adheres to his translation of "stage tricks" for "*scenicis artibus*," but we may now disregard him, in so far at least as "stage" means to us "pertaining to the boards of a playhouse." The wan-

dering minstrels had many tricks in their trade—if Saxo's word means aught more than "idle" or "wanton," then it means simply such things as the minstrel did: i.e., dressing up as a woman, playing the quack-physician, perhaps even portraying with his *spilwib* some crude pantomime of lust.

V [Holder, 133]. Eric Mál-spaki (the Shrewd-Spoken), son of Ragnar the champion, by eating the black part of the magic snake-pottage prepared by his stepmother Kraka had become wise to an incredible degree. When he comes to war against the Danes he is approached by the scurrilous Grep, son of Westmar, a guardian of young Frode, and the inevitable flyting ensues. Says Grep to the mighty Eric:

Thou art thought to be as full of quibbling as a cock of dirt;
Thou stinkest heavy with filth, and reekest of nought but sin.
There is no need to lengthen the plea against a buffoon,
Whose strength is in an empty and voluble tongue.¹

The fourth line explains succinctly why Grep calls the Swedish hero a *scurra* (buffoon)—he would make Eric appear *an empty braggart*.

VI [Holder, 195]. Helge the Norwegian, suitor for the hand of Helga the daughter of Frode IV of Denmark, has impetuously agreed to fight singlehanded Anganty of Zealand, a rival suitor, and his eight brothers. Impelled by his dread of the unequal combat Helge sends a messenger to Starkad in Upsala inviting him to the wedding of Frode's daughter, secretly hoping for the great hero's help. But Starkad is pleased to consider the invitation an insult and turning on Helge's messenger tells him "he must think Starkad like some buffoon or trencherman is accustomed to rush off to the reek of a distant kitchen for the sake of a richer diet" (se scurre uel parasiti more laucioris alimonie gracia ad aliene culine nidorem decurrere solitum existimauerit). Here *scurra* is used of one whose chief concern is the lining of his paunch—a *glutton*.

From the preceding passages of Saxo's history we see two things: first, *mimus* and its synonyms were used indiscriminately to indicate any sort of vulgar entertainer; second, these words more often

¹ Vt gallus ceni, sic litis plenus habetis;
Sorde gravis putes, nec nisi crimen oles.
Aduersum scurram causam producere non est,
Qui vacua uocis mobilitate uiget.

connote simply idleness and baseness. It is important to note that, so far as we may read from the writings of Saxo, there is often little if any difference in content and manner between court-poetry and the sort of poetry which critics have assigned to the *mimi*:

[Holder, 208]: *Pascit, ut porcum, petulans maritum,
Impudens scortum natibusque fidens
Gratis admissum tolerare penem
Crimini stupri.*

[Holder, 140]: *Quando tuam limas admissa cote bipennem,
Nonne terit tremulas mentula quassa nates?—
"Ut cuivis natura pilos in corpore sevit,
Omnis nempe suo barba ferenda loco est.
Re Veneris homines artus agitare necesse est;
Motus quippe suos nam labor omnis habet.
Cum natis excipitur nate, vel cum subdita penem
Vulva capit, quid ad haec addere mas renuit?"*

Such passages as these, which are by no means unique in Saxo, show clearly enough that the gulf between native Germanic singer and foreign *mimus*, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries at least, was one of the former's jealous making, rather than one which existed in fact. The *mimus* was abjured, because he took away the court-poet's audience,¹ and the latter revenged himself by calling him utterly depraved and ever adverting to his foreign origin. Who were these foreigners in the Germanic north? Winterfeld would derive them straight from Rome, if he had remembered his Saxo; but there is no reason to go so far afield. I imagine them simply graceless German ne'er-do-wells, *spielmänner* and *spielweiber*, detested by an old house-carle like Starkad, as were the cooking and luxury introduced in the eleventh century from Germany. One of their nobler brothers from Saxony is the *cantor* who tried in vain to warn Kanute of a conspiracy against his life by singing the song of Grimhild's treachery to her brothers [Holder, 427].

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¹ F. York Powell cites in this connection *Corpus poeticum boreale*, I, 255, 530; II, 275 f., 327. The court-poet's pride in his achievements lingers in the legend of how the Danes gave the crown to Hiarn [Hjarrand the harper] because he wrote so beautiful an ode to dead Frode [Holder, 172].